
Permitting Services

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) is to protect the safety and welfare of County residents and businesses through the permitting and inspections process to ensure that the structures in which we live, work, congregate, and recreate are safe, secure and in compliance with zoning and building requirements. DPS contributes to the economic vitality of Montgomery County through the effective and efficient processing of land development and building construction permits and licenses.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

The total approved FY15 Operating Budget for the Department of Permitting Services is \$32,007,836, an increase of \$2,365,765 or 8.0 percent from the FY14 Approved Budget of \$29,642,071. Personnel Costs comprise 72.5 percent of the budget for 201 full-time positions and one part-time position, and a total of 206.50 FTEs. Total FTEs may include seasonal or temporary positions and may also reflect workforce charged to or from other departments or funds. Operating Expenses account for the remaining 27.5 percent of the FY15 budget.

LINKAGE TO COUNTY RESULT AREAS

While this program area supports all eight of the County Result Areas, the following are emphasized:

- ❖ ***A Responsive, Accountable County Government***
- ❖ ***An Effective and Efficient Transportation Network***
- ❖ ***Healthy and Sustainable Neighborhoods***
- ❖ ***Safe Streets and Secure Neighborhoods***
- ❖ ***Strong and Vibrant Economy***
- ❖ ***Vital Living for All of Our Residents***

DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures for this department are included below, with multi-program measures displayed at the front of this section and program-specific measures shown with the relevant program. The FY14 estimates reflect funding based on the FY14 approved budget. The FY15 and FY16 figures are performance targets based on the FY15 approved budget and funding for comparable service levels in FY16.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INITIATIVES

- ❖ ***DPS implemented several streamlining initiative recommendations including publication of Environmentally Sensitive Design guidelines and policy documents; publication of common plan mistakes document; delegation of signature authority for development documents; and elimination of redundant M-NCPPC zoning review for recorded lots less than 40,000 square feet.***
- ❖ ***DPS completed and implemented new performance measures for all divisions.***
- ❖ ***The Department reduced fee structures for mid-rise woodframe multi-family construction, as well as, modified 90 automated systems processes to implement a 50% reduction of the Automation Enhancement Fee.***
- ❖ ***The Department modified all permit system components to implement new regulatory requirements for street trees, tree canopy, sediment control, and special protection areas.***
- ❖ ***DPS implemented revised Design for Life and Urban Forestry programs to include development of technical manuals, and sign sweep program to reduce signs in the Rights-of-Way.***

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- ❖ **Developed and implemented new tree protection programs and Design for Life Tax Incentive Program – two significant new programs that respectively protect the environment and promote increased accessibility options in homes.**
 - ❖ **DPS implemented new residential energy code requirements and received a 92% compliance score from Maryland Energy Administration.**
 - ❖ **DPS created the new Division of Zoning and Site Plan Enforcement to protect the quality of life in Montgomery County and the public safety, welfare, health, and comfort of the present and future inhabitants of the County, through the effective application and enforcement of zoning code standards and M-NCPPC certified site plan requirements. This division reviews plans prior to permit issuance and conducts inspections, as well as investigates complaints in order to administer and enforce the zoning standards established by Chapter 59 of the Montgomery County Code. This program regulates size, shape, height, and mass of a building and the uses that are allowed on the property.**
 - ❖ **The state adopted the 2012 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) and the International Green Construction Code (IGCC). The County adopted the IECC 2012; the IGCC will be replacing the Montgomery County Green Building Law. All applications submitted for building permits, residential and commercial, will be checked for the complex requirements, including software modeling.**
 - ❖ **As a result of Bills 35-12 and 41-12 establishing requirements for the planting of trees or the payment of a fee for certain construction activities where a sediment control permit is required, DPS will add one Senior Permitting Specialist for the technical review of building, sediment control, and right of way plans and one Senior Permitting Services Inspector for sediment control and right of way inspections.**
 - ❖ **Productivity Improvements**
 - **Developed and launched e-permit for: electrical permits, standard residential decks, right-of-way permits, new homes, right-of-way permits, and right-of-way stump removals. The online process now accounts for approximately 46% of all electrical permits, with almost immediate permit issuance. This has resulted in the elimination of backlog for other electrical permits, licenses, and approvals.**
 - **Developed an on-line payment option for various permit processes.**
 - **ePermits and ePlans have expedited permit processing and issuance and resulted in a significant reduction in paper consumption and vehicle trips, while providing time savings for residential and commercial customers.**
 - **Implemented Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Housing and Community Affairs providing cross delegation of authority for more complete, efficient, and effective code enforcement.**
 - **The Department completed electronic checklists for certain inspections.**
 - **In FY15 and FY16, the Department will develop, test, and launch e-plans for commercial, fire protection, fire alarm, and mechanical permits.**
 - **In addition to focusing on e-plans and e-permits, DPS will be making changes to their website and continue to explore additional uses of technology by inspectors.**

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Barbara Suter of the Department of Permitting Services at 240.777.6244 or Dennis Hetman of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2770 for more information regarding this department's operating budget.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Land Development

The Land Development program is responsible for ensuring the protection of the County's land and water resources and for the protection of the environment and the safety of residents and businesses through its engineering and inspection functions related to stormwater management, sediment control, floodplain management, special protection areas, well-and-septic systems approval, storm drain design and construction, and work in the public right-of-way.

FY15 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY14 Approved	6,770,134	58.50
Increase Cost: Land Development Inspector/Plan Reviewer for Tree Bills 35-12 and 41-12	183,265	2.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	264,345	0.00
FY15 Approved	7,217,744	60.50

Customer Service

The Customer Service program ensures customer service and satisfaction. This division measures customer satisfaction through communication and public outreach. Customer service receives complaints, processes information requests, responds to departmental correspondence, maintains the DPS web site, publishes the DPS newsletter, and coordinates outreach events and seminars for residents, civic organizations and professionals. Customer Service assists applicants with intake and issuance of permits and facilitates the processing of permits for "green tape" projects (i.e., affordable housing and areas such as the Silver Spring, Wheaton, and Long Branch enterprise zones, strategic economic development projects such as White Flint, and faith based institutions). This division develops customer service surveys for the department, analyzes the results, reports findings, and recommends a course of action for improvement.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY12	Actual FY13	Estimated FY14	Target FY15	Target FY16
Response time on complaint investigations - Average number of days from the complaint being filed to first contact between a Permitting Inspector and the customer	5.01	7.15	5.00	5.00	5.00
Response time on complaint investigations - Average number of days from the complaint being filed to final resolution of the complaint	7.31	11.3	12	12	12
Percent of complaints that are resolved on the first inspection	69.18	13.20	75.00	75.00	75.00

FY15 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY14 Approved	1,066,657	11.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	4,266	-1.00
FY15 Approved	1,070,923	10.00

Building Construction

The Building Construction program ensures public safety and welfare through the effective enforcement of construction, zoning codes and standards, and site plan requirements. This division reviews engineering plans for permit issuance and conducts construction inspections in the administration and enforcement of building, structural, electrical, mechanical, fire-safety, energy conservation, green building, and accessibility codes and standards. This division assists businesses and applicants through pre-submission meetings and guidance. The program is also responsible for conducting county-wide damage assessments during natural and other disasters and incidents and provides assistance in disaster recovery efforts.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY12	Actual FY13	Estimated FY14	Target FY15	Target FY16
Average number of days to issue a permit - New construction: Commercial permits ¹	160.54	264.51	88	88	88
Average number of days to issue a permit - New construction: Residential permits	88.28	82.03	75	75	75
Average number of days to issue a permit - Additions: Commercial permits	60.95	51.30	52	52	52
Average number of days to issue a permit - Additions: Residential permits	16.02	17.29	18	18	18
Median number of minutes to issue a permit - Permits for commercial alterations obtained using the Department of Permitting Services' Fast Track process	146.50	119	120	120	120
Median number of minutes to issue a permit - Residential permits using the Department of Permitting Services' Fast Track process	58.0	61	55	55	55
Percent of building permits issued that received a final inspection: Commercial permits	20.30	25.15	50	50	50
Percent of building permits issued that received a final inspection: Commercial permits through the Department of Permitting Services' Fast Track process	44.77	46.51	75	75	75
Percent of building permits issued that received a final inspection: Residential new construction	28.81	42.50	60	60	60
Percent of building permits issued that received a final inspection: Residential all construction	40.97	48.57	70	70	70

¹ Measure includes several large applications that reactivated after several years due to County economic relief bills; days attributable to DPS

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review are 88.

FY15 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY14 Approved	13,086,590	117.90
Increase Cost: Energy Conservation and Green Construction Plan Reviewers	187,218	2.00
Increase Cost: Team II Residential Inspector	112,633	1.00
Increase Cost: Building Construction Plan Reviewer for Fire Protection	76,287	1.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	-3,048,816	-29.00
FY15 Approved	10,413,912	92.90

Administration

The Administration program provides policy development and leadership for all programs within the department. Staff specialists are responsible for a full range of administrative, financial, and budgetary tasks, including daily operations, automation, human resources management, training, safety, quality assurance, legislative coordination, space management, historic files management, and management services.

FY15 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY14 Approved	8,718,690	13.10
Increase Cost: Contract Costs for Service Support	1,300,000	0.00
Increase Cost: Risk Management Adjustment (Load in 63804)	168,530	0.00
Increase Cost: Office Rent	59,800	0.00
Increase Cost: Maintenance of Information Technology Systems	27,722	0.00
Decrease Cost: IT Replacement Plan	-90,000	0.00
Decrease Cost: Retiree Health Insurance Pre-Funding Adjustment	-712,310	0.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	40,976	0.00
FY15 Approved	9,513,408	13.10

Zoning and Site Plan Enforcement

The Zoning and Site Plan Enforcement program protects the quality of life in Montgomery County and the public safety, welfare, health, and comfort of the present and future inhabitants of Montgomery County, through the effective application and enforcement of zoning code standards and M-NCPPC certified site plan requirements. This division reviews plans prior to permit issuance and conducts inspections, as well as investigates complaints in order to administer and enforce the zoning standards established by Chapter 59 of the Montgomery County Code. This program regulates size, shape, height, and mass of a building and the uses that are allowed on the property.

FY15 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY14 Approved	0	0.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	3,791,849	30.00
FY15 Approved	3,791,849	30.00

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY13	Budget FY14	Estimated FY14	Approved FY15	% Chg Bud/App
PERMITTING SERVICES					
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Wages	14,989,581	15,698,262	13,653,891	16,891,234	7.6%
Employee Benefits	5,874,179	5,944,558	5,371,937	6,314,202	6.2%
Permitting Services Personnel Costs	20,863,760	21,642,820	19,025,828	23,205,436	7.2%
Operating Expenses	6,830,265	7,999,251	8,663,751	8,802,400	10.0%
Capital Outlay	0	0	0	0	—
Permitting Services Expenditures	27,694,025	29,642,071	27,689,579	32,007,836	8.0%
PERSONNEL					
Full-Time	192	195	195	201	3.1%
Part-Time	1	1	1	1	—
FTEs	197.60	200.50	200.50	206.50	3.0%
REVENUES					
Automation Enhancement Fee	3,991,592	2,936,433	2,574,615	1,633,791	-44.4%
Building Permits	19,875,558	14,486,935	22,980,338	21,001,416	45.0%
Electrical Permits and Licenses	4,213,498	2,753,431	4,084,571	3,400,000	23.5%
Fire Code Enforcement Permits	1,723,074	1,544,704	1,433,936	1,544,934	0.0%
Grading/Storm Drains/Paving/Driveway Permits	6,248,681	4,784,370	5,836,218	6,000,000	25.4%
Investment Income	9,889	4,520	16,414	24,000	431.0%
Mechanical Construction Permit	1,655,587	759,187	1,423,596	1,200,000	58.1%
Miscellaneous Revenues	15,737	0	0	0	—
Occupancy Permits	755,328	561,318	841,058	700,000	24.7%
Sediment Control Permits	3,196,740	2,569,000	2,979,510	2,569,000	—
Sign Permits	166,517	196,510	161,651	196,510	—
Special Exception Fee	221,409	232,010	232,010	232,010	—
Stormwater Mgmt and Water Quality Plan Fee	252,517	467,345	292,478	270,000	-42.2%
Well and Septic	235,474	293,870	188,213	200,000	-31.9%
Other Charges/Fees	60,306	72,100	78,165	92,784	28.7%
Other Fines/Forfeitures	65,310	0	82,719	0	—
Other Licenses/Permits	1,077,743	639,030	1,622,537	1,146,180	79.4%
Permitting Services Revenues	43,764,960	32,300,763	44,828,029	40,210,625	24.5%

FY15 APPROVED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
PERMITTING SERVICES		
FY14 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION	29,642,071	200.50
Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)		
Increase Cost: Contract Costs for Service Support [Administration]	1,300,000	0.00
Increase Cost: General Wage Adjustment	549,505	0.00
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY14 Compensation Increases	207,147	0.00
Increase Cost: Energy Conservation and Green Construction Plan Reviewers [Building Construction]	187,218	2.00
Increase Cost: Land Development Inspector/Plan Reviewer for Tree Bills 35-12 and 41-12 [Land Development]	183,265	2.00
Increase Cost: Risk Management Adjustment (Load in 63804) [Administration]	168,530	0.00
Increase Cost: Service Increment/Longevity Adjustment	129,377	0.00
Increase Cost: Team II Residential Inspector [Building Construction]	112,633	1.00
Increase Cost: Retirement Adjustment	99,641	0.00
Increase Cost: Building Construction Plan Reviewer for Fire Protection [Building Construction]	76,287	1.00
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY14 Lapsed Positions	68,480	0.00
Increase Cost: Office Rent [Administration]	59,800	0.00
Increase Cost: Group Insurance Adjustment	38,171	0.00
Increase Cost: Maintenance of Information Technology Systems [Administration]	27,722	0.00
Increase Cost: Printing and Mail	8,090	0.00
Decrease Cost: Motor Pool Rate Adjustment (Load in account code 63500)	-47,791	0.00
Decrease Cost: IT Replacement Plan [Administration]	-90,000	0.00
Decrease Cost: Retiree Health Insurance Pre-Funding Adjustment [Administration]	-712,310	0.00
FY15 APPROVED:	32,007,836	206.50

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Program Name	FY14 Approved		FY15 Approved	
	Expenditures	FTEs	Expenditures	FTEs
Land Development	6,770,134	58.50	7,217,744	60.50
Customer Service	1,066,657	11.00	1,070,923	10.00
Building Construction	13,086,590	117.90	10,413,912	92.90
Administration	8,718,690	13.10	9,513,408	13.10
Zoning and Site Plan Enforcement	0	0.00	3,791,849	30.00
Total	29,642,071	200.50	32,007,836	206.50

FUTURE FISCAL IMPACTS

Title	APPR.		(\$000's)			
	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
This table is intended to present significant future fiscal impacts of the department's programs.						
PERMITTING SERVICES						
Expenditures						
FY15 Approved	32,008	32,008	32,008	32,008	32,008	32,008
No inflation or compensation change is included in outyear projections.						
Annualization of Positions Approved in FY15	0	44	44	44	44	44
New positions in the FY15 budget are generally lapsed due to the time it takes a position to be created and filled. Therefore, the amounts above reflect annualization of these positions in the outyears.						
Elimination of One-Time Items Approved in FY15	0	-84	-84	-84	-84	-84
Items approved for one-time funding in FY15, including costs for land development inspectors, plan reviewers, and residential inspectors will be eliminated from the base in the outyears.						
Labor Contracts	0	208	208	208	208	208
These figures represent the estimated annualized cost of general wage adjustments, service increments, and associated benefits.						
Labor Contracts - Other	0	-35	-35	-35	-35	-35
These figures represent other negotiated items included in the labor agreements.						
IT Maintenance Costs	0	2	104	78	181	83
Represents additional maintenance costs for the system upgrades and post-warranty maintenance for servers, scanners, and printers.						
IT Replacement Plan	0	-310	-510	-442	119	-92
Key components of Permitting Service's technology replacement plan include: FY15 Printers (\$60,000), Scanners (\$31,500), Database servers and services (\$450,000); FY16 Scanners (\$31,500), Network switch (\$200,000); FY17 Scanners (\$31,500); FY18 Scanners (\$100,000); FY19 Printers (\$60,000), Servers (\$600,000). FY20 Permit DB Servers - Hardware & Software (\$450,000).						
Office Rent	0	60	155	254	357	465
Represents projected rent increase.						
Retiree Health Insurance Pre-Funding	0	-37	-91	-134	-189	-242
These figures represent the estimated cost of the multi-year plan to pre-fund retiree health insurance costs for the County's workforce.						
Subtotal Expenditures	32,008	31,855	31,799	31,897	32,608	32,354

ANNUALIZATION OF PERSONNEL COSTS AND FTEs

	FY15 Approved		FY16 Annualized	
	Expenditures	FTEs	Expenditures	FTEs
Increase Cost: Land Development Inspector/Plan Reviewer for Tree Bills 35-12 and 41-12 [Land Development]	131,271	2.00	175,038	2.00
Total	131,271	2.00	175,038	2.00